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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 16 February 1993, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. ADOUKI (Congo)

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Environment and development

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (DP/1993/3)

1. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) recalled how important it was to begin meetings on time in order to reduce the length of the sessions. He said that the question of environmental protection together with the rational management of development was attracting increasing interest throughout the world because it affected people's quality of life and sometimes their very survival, when they were victims of natural or man-made ecological disasters. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio had played a determining role in the elaboration of a sustainable development strategy, and his delegation supported the specific measures proposed by the UNDP Administrator in document DP/1993/3 for the implementation of the Capacity 21 programme and thus of Agenda 21. It hoped that the more detailed proposals he intended to present to the Governing Council at its fortieth session would include more information on cooperation between UNDP and the Commission on Sustainable Development and would lay down principles governing the operational phase of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as well as a specific plan of work.

2. His Government believed that Agenda 21 and GEF should give more space to regional and international programmes because the effects of industrial development and of ecological disasters were felt beyond national frontiers. It intended to take part in that kind of programme according to its means, as in the case of its participation in the project on ecological cooperation among the Black Sea countries. The struggle to deal with the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster was a good illustration of such a spirit of cooperation. Similarly, in line with Governing Council decision 91/23, UNDP could participate in a project to create an economic and social development zone in the Russian Federation to ensure the resettlement of the victims of the Chernobyl disaster. His delegation hoped that the project, which had been set up under a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) programme and had been submitted to the UNDP Governing Council, would receive broad support from UNDP. In general, his delegation attached great importance to UNDP action in the context of Agenda 21.

3. Mr. SHOJI (Japan) said that UNDP should put the enormous experience it had acquired in the field of capacity-building at the service of sustainable development. In doing so, it could take full advantage of its dialogue with developing countries and of its role as coordinator of the United Nations development activities at the field level and as the central funding agency of the United Nations development system. UNDP had, moreover, been mandated by UNCED to take the lead in the effort towards capacity-building at the local, national and regional levels.

4. Recognizing the importance of capacity-building for the promotion of sustainable development, and the urgent need to assist the developing

(Mr. Shoji, Japan)

countries, his Government was considering a significant contribution to the Capacity 21 programme over and above its contribution to the core fund. It was not in a position at that stage to announce its pledge officially but hoped to do so in the near future.

5. The general thrust of Capacity 21, as set out in document DP/1993/3, was acceptable, but the objectives and areas of activity needed to be made much clearer and more specific, and there must be standards for measuring the success not only of individual programmes but of Capacity 21 as a whole, so that, by the time of the review planned for late 1993 or early 1994, Member States would be able to evaluate the programme intelligently.

6. His delegation wished to emphasize that the resources made available to Capacity 21 were supposed to supplement the core fund resources and that the core fund - including the indicative planning figures (IPF) - would thus serve also to finance the Capacity 21 objectives. As to the criteria for selecting programmes, Japan attached importance to linking Capacity 21 activities to relevant activities funded through other means (domestic resources, whether bilateral or multilateral), as indicated in paragraph 30 (e) of the report. It should even be possible to count on other sources of financing, which should be used efficiently without losing sight of their linkage with the Capacity 21 funds.

7. With regard to management, his delegation approved of the Administrator's intention of managing the Capacity 21 programme in line with the provisions given by the Governing Council for Special Programme Resources (SPR). Excessive rigidity, however, should be avoided because it was harmful to the newly created funds, which were to be used basically as seed money.

8. His delegation noted with keen interest the idea of establishing a flexible mechanism for consultation with the donors and the recipient countries (para. 31) to complement the work of UNDP on a regular basis.

9. His delegation would offer its views on the internal capacity of UNDP during the next session of the Governing Council on the basis of the detailed proposals to be presented by the Administrator. However, it wished to state already that UNDP must integrate environmental considerations into development policies and programmes from the very earliest stages of their formulation, starting with the dialogue that took place between governments and UNDP at the field level. The regional bureaux and field offices had an important role to play in that regard, and the capacity of the various UNDP services other than the Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation (BPPE) and the Environment and Natural Resources Group needed to be strengthened.

10. Furthermore, UNDP should cooperate more with other development partners within and outside the United Nations system in order to enhance its overall capacity to contribute to sustainable development. Lastly, in improving the human resources of UNDP, every effort should be made to avoid increasing

(Mr. Shoji, Japan)

administrative costs. The staff should of course be trained and recruitment policy redirected, but consideration should also be given to reimbursing administrative costs incurred through management services rendered to non-core facilities, including GEF. In that connection, his delegation wished to know how the administrative cost of managing Capacity 21 would be reimbursed.

11. Mr. NISSEN (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, welcomed the UNDP commitment to rapid implementation of the UNCED recommendations. The Nordic countries regretted, however, that the UNDP administration had not consulted the Governing Council earlier on the organization, financing and implementation of the follow-up activities and on their implications for UNDP. That was an illustration of the need to organize UNDP in such a way as to allow member countries to give management guidance on a more ongoing basis.

12. With regard to document DP/1993/3, the Nordic countries appreciated the Programme's initiative to strengthen its internal capacity, but felt that those initiatives should not make UNDP into a new specialized agency. The Programme should draw on the technical expertise of other United Nations bodies as well as research institutes, non-governmental organizations and the private business sector and should cooperate with other developmental organizations in order to avoid duplication of effort. Nevertheless, the relevant recommendations should have been spelled out more clearly and those responsible for the different follow-up activities should have been identified. It would also have been useful if clear references had been made to what could be improved within existing means, how current initiatives could be strengthened and how the links between departments, and between the field and headquarters could be improved. Since the field offices would play an even more important role in view of the decentralization process, it was essential to ensure that UNDP had the necessary capacity at the field level. Furthermore, countries that had contributed seed money to help initiate the Programme's work in the field of environment had done so on the assumption that the Programme would include those expenses at a later stage in the regular budget. The Nordic countries therefore were somewhat disappointed that the report placed so much emphasis on extrabudgetary resources from donors.

13. The management of UNDP and the Governing Council should implement the recommendations of UNCED on capacity-building and, to that end, should stop focusing more on resource mobilization than substantive issues. It was moreover surprising to discover that the report made no reference to the Programme's long experience in capacity-building. An analysis of past experience could provide a useful background for a more result-oriented approach to be followed. The concrete proposals for UNDP initiatives in that field gave much emphasis to the formulation of plans and programmes, to the detriment of a more action-oriented approach. More flexible approaches that more effectively addressed the particular needs of different countries were necessary. The Governments of recipient countries should actively involve national institutions and organizations in capacity-building activities. The

(Mr. Nissen, Norway)

Nordic countries also wished to stress that those activities should be financed through extrabudgetary funds within the regular programme. They were therefore skeptical about the proposal to set up a separate governing mechanism for Capacity 21.

14. The Nordic countries hoped that UNDP would continue to play an important role as one of the three managing agencies in the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as the Facility moved from the pilot phase to the operational phase. They would, however, like to receive more information on the content of UNDP-managed GEF projects and on how those projects complemented regular UNDP projects since GEF projects might differ from projects based on national priorities. The Nordic countries therefore proposed that an informal briefing on those questions should be held during the June 1993 session of the Governing Council.

15. With regard to the question of drought and desertification, UNDP should put particular emphasis on strengthening national capacity to manage natural resources in arid and semi-arid areas in developing countries. The Programme could also assist those countries in designing drought-preparedness programmes and addressing issues like management of scarce water resources and environmental degradation. The Nordic countries did not share the view expressed in paragraph 54 of the report to the effect that lack of financing had been one of the main obstacles to successful desertification programmes. There was a need to improve existing activities in terms of better coordination of programmes, stronger government involvement, more demand-driven activities and improved mechanisms for people's participation. In the negotiation process on the international convention to combat drought and desertification, UNDP must clearly define its role and strategies related to sustainable development in fragile ecosystems and be ready to participate in coordination mechanisms with other development organizations. The work of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) was an integral part of the Programme's broader involvement in environment and development issues. The Nordic countries would return to the questions concerning UNSO in the report at the June session of the Governing Council.

16. Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the Global Environment Facility was a guarantee for developing countries that the agreements reached at UNCED would be carried out. The Group of 77 therefore, within the framework of preparing intergovernmental meetings on designing the new GEF structure, had revised the component elements in order to ensure democracy and transparency. The revision concerned, in particular, the following points: conditions for joining, decision-making mechanisms, definition of the concept of extra costs, the role of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel and coordination mechanisms between the Facility and the Commission on Sustainable Development.

17. There was a need to strengthen the capacity of UNDP to establish a better balance between the three bodies responsible for managing GEF. Furthermore,

(Mr. Jaramillo, Colombia)

the Council could enhance the effectiveness of the Programme's work with regard to the environment and its decisions should fully take into account the ongoing consultations.

18. Mrs. COLEMAN-ADEBAYO (United States of America) said that her Government welcomed the efforts by UNDP to expand its internal capacity to meet the growing need for assistance on the part of member countries in the area of environmental protection. Those efforts, which should enable UNDP to carry out the considerable task entrusted to it at the Conference on Environment and Development, should play a leading role in determining how and in what direction its environment programme should proceed.

19. In its Human Development Report, UNDP emphasized the role of women in development and environmental protection. That question, however, was not given the same level of attention in Capacity 21 or the report of the Administrator. Her Government wished to know how women's participation was being factored into the Capacity 21 project and whether the Environment and Natural Resources Group had developed a strategy in that area. Capacity 21 was designed to develop the internal capacity of countries to manage their own sustainable development and environmental protection, a concept that her country deeply supported. If successful, the project might redefine the concept of technical assistance.

20. The United States would encourage a revision of the document entitled "Capacity 21 - A Programme in Support of Agenda 21" in order to strengthen its technical and evaluative components and add more specifics. UNDP should provide a detailed strategy outlining the targeted countries and sectors, timetables, evaluation and feedback mechanisms, and should establish specific goals and criteria that would help to define the financial and human resources needed for the implementation of Capacity 21. The goal might be, for example, for developing countries to achieve within five years 40 to 60 per cent self-sufficiency in managing their water resources and to decrease their reliance on external experts by 20 per cent.

21. Her Government was pleased to note that the Capacity 21 project was to convene a steering board consisting of donors, NGOs and other concerned parties, to provide recommendations on the operation of the project. UNDP should seek to involve the specialized agencies and the United Nations Environment Programme in the development and implementation of the project in order to avoid duplication of effort. The United States Environmental Protection Agency would provide financial and technical assistance for the project and would continue to work closely with UNDP in the field and at headquarters.

22. On the issue of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), it would be useful for UNDP to say how adequate its staff was to develop and implement a variety of GEF-related projects, such as the small grants window. The Administrator's report implied that GEF funds would support, among other things, environmental

(Mrs. Coleman-Adebayo, United States)

capacity-building at UNDP. Her Government would appreciate clarification of that point since it did not appear that donors had intended GEF resources to be used for those purposes. She would like to know what strategy UNDP had developed to ensure meaningful participation in GEF in the post-pilot phase, and whether the Capacity 21 project and GEF would complement each other.

23. The question of land use should be mentioned in the part of the report dealing with drought and desertification, since desertification was as much related to land use as it was to natural resource use. Any discussion focusing on a lack of adequate financing should centre on the efficient use of existing funds in the area of desertification. It was not yet clear whether GEF would be a funding source for desertification projects.

24. Finally, her Government cautioned UNDP not to undertake programme responsibilities or to pursue ambitious programme completion timetables beyond its internal capacity. Her Government was not sure of the current capacity of UNDP to oversee its GEF projects and had criticized it in the past for a lack of transparency in its GEF operations, but hoped that through the implementation of Capacity 21 the goals and spirit of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would be realized.

25. Mr. NEUMANN (Germany) said he wished to add certain points to the statement made by the representative of Denmark on behalf of the European Economic Community, with which his delegation was in full agreement. At the Government's request, the German Parliament had appropriated 10 million deutsche mark for Capacity 21, but the funds would only become available if the budget committee was convinced that the programme made sense and was actually being implemented. Other major donors would also have to participate in financing the pilot phase. Neither condition had been met as yet.

26. The Administrator's report did not make it very clear why it was not an integral part of the mandate of UNDP to build national capacity in all priority sectors. It was therefore hard to see why, before issuing a call for additional funds, all programmes had not been partly reoriented to take into account environmental goals. The problem was not a new one.

27. In its decision 92/16, the Governing Council had indeed requested the Administrator to mobilize resources to strengthen support for national capacity-building in the area of environment and sustainable development, but through existing mechanisms; thus the Administrator had not been authorized to launch Capacity 21 without first receiving the Governing Council's consent.

28. Another point that caused his delegation some concern was the fact that UNDP was creating new internal and external administrative structures; that stood in contradiction to the need to take an integrated approach to projects in all areas. His delegation failed to see why Capacity 21 had to be a forum for facilitating cooperation between United Nations agencies, donors and recipient countries, nor why a management committee had been established, when

(Mr. Neumann, Germany)

all decisions were to have been taken through existing mechanisms. Germany was opposed to the creation of special structures or of a new trust fund, believing as it did that Capacity 21 should be an account into which additional funds with a cross-sectoral orientation could be paid, no more and no less.

29. His delegation fully endorsed the objectives of Capacity 21 as formulated in the Administrator's report (DP/1993/3) and previous documents. It hoped the project would succeed and that such concrete arguments would be forthcoming as would persuade the German budget committee to release the 10 million deutsche mark which had been appropriated.

30. With regard to UNSO, his Government was not convinced that the African regional organizations already working on the problems of drought and desertification would accept an expansion of the mandate of UNSO so that it would become a central coordinating body for that issue.

31. Mr. GUILLEN (Peru) said that on the whole he was satisfied with the Administrator's report, but wished to highlight three points. First, Peru thought that UNDP had an essential role to play in environmental protection, and that Capacity 21 was therefore an indispensable tool in providing assistance to recipient countries. Second, UNDP should have supported more actively the reorganization of the Global Environment Facility, one of the great achievements of the Rio Summit. Thirdly, UNDP should play a more active role in combating drought and desertification, which were becoming increasingly serious problems in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, Peru proposed that UNDP should support measures to control soil degradation.

32. Mr. BARAC (Romania) fully endorsed the strategy set out in the Administrator's report for enabling UNDP to play its assigned role in the implementation of the decisions of the Conference on Environment and Development and of Agenda 21. He agreed with the proposals to strengthen the internal capacity of UNDP, partly through its relationship with the rest of the United Nations system, which had always supported sustainable development and were increasingly seeking to integrate environmental considerations in their activities.

33. Romania appreciated the intention to strengthen local capacity in field offices while establishing partnership arrangements with NGOs, the private sector, the scientific community and donor country sources of expertise. His delegation supported the recruitment policy defined in paragraph 22 of the Administrator's report, but emphasized that UNDP should pay particular attention to candidates from countries not represented among its staff.

34. His delegation had noted with great interest the Administrator's views on Capacity 21, particularly the fact that it would provide a framework for collaboration and exchange of information and expertise between all those able

(Mr. Barac, Romania)

to contribute to the formulation and implementation of policies to ensure sustainable development.

35. Mr. SUN Jie (China) welcomed the measures that had been taken to follow up the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, particularly with regard to Capacity 21. With respect to the Administrator's report, China's first concern was with the need to ensure continuity in the implementation of country programmes, which reflected the situation and priorities of individual countries, while giving greater and greater weight to environmental considerations. In that connection, Capacity 21 was an important tool and a supplement to, not a replacement for, country programmes.

36. Secondly, rather than increasing the number of institutions, it would be better to develop UNDP capabilities, if possible within the current budget and without increasing overhead. Lastly, working methods should be improved, particularly with regard to the essential function of UNDP, namely financing. However, capacity-building must also be pursued within the national administrations of recipient countries so as to ensure the optimum use of resources.

37. Ms. WYRSCH (Switzerland) was pleased to note that UNDP itself recognized that the principle and the purpose of Capacity 21 still needed to be developed and spelt out more clearly. Switzerland was convinced that UNDP had a role to play in the follow-up to the Rio Summit, particularly with regard to national capacity-building - a traditional part of its mandate - and in view of the integration of the environment into the notion of development. She wondered, however, what the exact nature and ultimate goal of Capacity 21 might be: was it a fund for capacity-building with a view to sustainable development in general, the environment being one consideration among others, or was it almost exclusively intended to enhance environmental management capacity?

38. Again, it appeared from a reading of the report (DP/1993/3) that Capacity 21 was being justified in so many ways and given so many functions that its basic purpose was in danger of being forgotten. Too ambitious an approach could lead to confusion. Finally, Switzerland believed that UNDP should take advantage of its proven capabilities and its practical experience with regard to human development and sustainable development and should prefer concrete action to more and more refined strategic reflections.

39. Mr. TRAXL (Austria) said that UNDP activities in the field of environment must be based on its comparative advantages and should be aimed at national capacity-building, at increasing knowledge and awareness and at strengthening Governments' and people's participation. UNDP needed to support countries in the formulation and implementation of sustainable development strategies, and additional resources needed to be channelled into the building of capacity to manage the environment and natural resources in the context of economic and social development. Thus Austria welcomed the launching of Capacity 21 and would support it with a contribution of US$ 1 million.

(Mr. Traxl, Austria)

40. However, Austria expected that environment and sustainable development would be in the forefront of all UNDP programmes and projects financed from regular budgetary resources. It also hoped that at the time of the regular Council meeting in June 1993, UNDP would present a programme for Capacity 21 in more concrete terms and a report on its first achievements, with emphasis on its governance and its coordination with activities of other organizations.

41. UNDP should make good use of its network of field offices and of the available expertise of specialized agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) should be able to provide the necessary resources to tackle global environmental issues in an effective manner. Austria expected UNDP to participate actively in GEF during its operational phase, on which an increased flow of information to the Governing Council would be appropriate.

42. The Austrian Government congratulated UNDP on the great emphasis on combating drought and desertification. In that area, emphasis should be placed on integrated programmes designed both to promote sustainable agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and energy production and to develop the capacity of the local populations to carry out such activities - initially in a locally limited way, and later on a larger scale and even in other regions.

43. Mr. KABIR (Observer for Bangladesh) found the Administrator's report very interesting. In the light of the Rio Conference, it was natural to see a rapid acceleration in the demand from the developing countries for national capacity-building in the area of sustainable development, and UNDP had rightly been given the role of lead agency in implementing Agenda 21. Capacity 21 was the first response of UNDP, and Bangladesh continued to support it.

44. However, the target of $100 million set for the pilot phase was obviously inadequate. Bangladesh believed that only if additional resources were made available would Capacity 21 have the desired results at the local, national and regional levels, and would like to draw the Governing Council's attention to the particular needs of the least developed countries, which were well known, while their capacity to respond was extremely limited. He hoped that sufficient priority would be given to those countries and that the field offices would be strengthened accordingly.

45. Emphasis should also be placed on coordinating the UNDP response in that area with other agencies of the United Nations, the Global Environment Facility, international financial institutions, the private sector, the scientific community and NGOs. In addition, his delegation fully associated itself with the statements made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77. Lastly, his delegation supported the efforts of UNDP in strengthening its role in combating drought and desertification, but would like to emphasize that collaboration between UNSO and other operational units and regional bureaux of UNDP needed to be further strengthened, so that other regions could also benefit from the experience of UNDP in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

46. Mr. BORJA DE MOZOTA (France) regretted that the Administrator's report had assumed a form which more closely resembled an internal document focusing on UNDP itself and the concern to strengthen its personnel than a work programme focusing on the actual capacities and capacity-building of recipient countries. What was more serious was that only one line had been devoted to the overriding issue of South-South cooperation.

47. Having expressed its reservations concerning the form of the report, France essentially supported the Capacity 21 initiative and had decided to make a financial contribution of FF 7 million to the pilot phase. However, it requested specific details regarding the programme's mandate and the procedures involved. Capacity 21 had been established in order to ensure that the commitments of principle made at Rio could be carried out through the mobilization of additional resources for operations aimed at tackling local problems of sustainable development - as opposed to global problems, which were the concern of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). France was agreeable to that idea on certain conditions.

48. In the first place, while UNDP was naturally responsible for coordinating the arrangements introduced following the Rio Conference, that also meant that the various funds, programmes and specialized agencies would be involved in both the definition and the implementation of Capacity 21. Moreover, there was some contradiction in presenting sustainable development as a priority for UNDP action, while simultaneously calling for extrabudgetary resources through a specific fund. In view of the heavy financial constraints on donors, UNDP might not have sufficient financial and human resources to enable it to play fully the role of coordinator and preferred partner of the international financial institutions.

49. UNDP action would have the advantage of developing the new approach represented by the quest for sustainable development, but it should be translated into specific operational programmes. Combating desertification was a good example in that respect. Finally, Capacity 21 should be at the service of the Commission on Sustainable Development: that would then become a revitalized instrument for technical cooperation.

50. Mrs. VOLKOFF (Canada) welcomed the information on Capacity 21 provided by the Administrator in his report on environment and development (DP/1993/3). Noting that the Administrator intended to present more detailed proposals on those issues at the Governing Council session in June 1993, she said she believed that the current special session provided a good opportunity to raise a number of matters which could help to guide and inform the process leading up to the June session.

51. UNDP has been working for a number of years, particularly since the Brundtland report, to integrate environmental concerns into its development programmes. The country programmes currently under consideration showed evidence that such integration was well under way, even if more remained to be done.

(Mrs. Volkoff, Canada)

52. In participating with UNDP in the launching of Capacity 21 at UNCED in June 1992, and by committing Can$ 2 million at that time, Canada had affirmed its strong support for the principles underlying Capacity 21, namely the importance of strengthening government capacities in planning for sustainable development. The importance of national capacity-building was so well recognized since UNCED that a plethora of initiatives, both multilateral and bilateral, was now being pursued, not simply in the general area of environment and development, but often specifically in the field of capacity-building. Canada supported the lead role assigned to UNDP in that area, which it was carrying out through both its regular programming and Capacity 21. Canada believed that the latter should act as a catalyst for the overall activities of UNDP in that field. However, in order to understand how UNDP would play its role, a clearer picture was needed of the larger framework of initiatives. It would be helpful if, in the report to be submitted in June, the work of UNDP was not seen in isolation from that of the other parties concerned. The nature of the catalyst role needed to be spelt out much more clearly in relationship to that of the other partners, including the World Bank and GEF.

53. Canada shared the view of other delegations which had emphasized the importance of field operations in the implementation of Capacity 21. Given the central role of recipient Governments in planning for sustainable development, UNDP thus had a good opportunity to demonstrate its support for decentralization by explaining how the field offices would be used from the standpoint of the catalyst role of UNDP with regard to Capacity 21.

54. Mr. ANDERSON (Jamaica) supported the activities proposed by UNDP in the field of environment and development (DP/1993/3), in particular those linked to Capacity 21, namely the objectives and strategies relating to the three programme elements of human resources, institutions and an enabling environment. His delegation also supported those aspects which were related to strengthening the internal capacity of UNDP, both vertically (the field office network) and horizontally (relations with other United Nations agencies). With regard to GEF and questions related to drought and desertification, his delegation recognized the importance of the effective management of natural resources and the pivotal relationship of such resources to sustainable development.

55. Jamaica continued to play its part as a member of the global community in the context of United Nations action to prevent threats to the global environment. The development of the institutional structure and the improvement of the interrelationship between United Nations agencies represented a very important area of interest. Jamaica hoped to contribute to that development and to benefit from any resources, financial or otherwise, which might flow.

56. The Jamaican Government had begun to put in place the necessary infrastructure for the implementation of several of the recommendations

(Mr. Anderson, Jamaica)

arising from Agenda 21 as a confirmation of its commitment to sustainable development. The partnership between the Government, the population and UNDP should be developed in a creative manner.

57. Jamaica has been a party to the process of cooperation with other Caribbean countries in the UNCED process. In the hope that that cooperation would continue, it had been participating in the preparations for the forthcoming international conference on small island developing countries, which was scheduled to take place in Barbados. It was natural that Jamaica should share the deep concern of other countries in respect of both their fragile ecosystems and the dangers to coastal areas - and in some cases to entire island countries. It was to be hoped that, in the wake of the proposed conference, special attention would be paid to the concerns and needs of those countries and that UNDP would be able to make a further useful contribution in that area of activity by strengthening its role in the field of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC). His delegation looked forward to the fortieth session of the Governing Council, at which it expected more specific proposals in the area of sustainable development to be submitted.

58. Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom) said that the case for strengthening the Programme's internal capacity to address environmental issues was irrefutable. However, the document under consideration (DP/1993/3) contained only rather vague proposals that concentrated more on current shortcomings than future solutions. For his delegation, the key issue was integration. As the document indicated, environmental concerns and sustainable development should be a part of every project and programme. However, a main concern for his delegation was the extent to which extrabudgetary resources could be relied on to strengthen the Programme's internal capacity. His delegation wished to know how sustainable such resources were and what scale of resources UNDP was envisaging. If environment was a key aspect of all UNDP activities, then it was the core budget that should be used primarily to address it.

59. The solutions for addressing the strongly felt need for more support in field offices were not sufficient. UNDP should be more specific about how field offices would get the technical expertise and support they needed to formulate and backstop sustainable development programmes. Moreover, since every development agency in the world was currently trying to redirect its activities in the same way as UNDP, there was already a wealth of common experience and expertise. UNDP should clarify what mechanisms it would use to pool ideas in order to prevent a huge multiplication of parallel work.

60. His delegation expressed concern about the way the Capacity 21 initiative had been announced without the endorsement of the Governing Council. While it recognized the need for the Programme to operate in that area, his delegation wondered whether UNDP would be able to reach the target of $100 million for Capacity 21. It also wished to know how the activities financed from extrabudgetary resources would be integrated into the main programme. Since Capacity 21 was intended to cover activities financed from both the core

(Mr. Machin, United Kingdom)

budget and extrabudgetary resources, it would be necessary to define the relative importance of those two sources of financing and indicate the number of countries in which UNDP would operate under that programme.

61. The proposals contained in the Administrator's report placed great emphasis on planning activities but provided considerably less information on specific action. UNDP should indicate how it intended to measure the impact of each programme carried out under Capacity 21. In that regard, the Programme could make use of the considerable experience of capacity-building successes and failures in the environmental and other fields.

62. Referring to the hopes for the development of an instrument for marshalling knowledge and expertise (DP/1993/3, paras. 27 and 28), his delegation wished to know whether UNDP had any solid evidence that other agencies would be willing to collaborate with it on the development of a common framework, given the chequered record of the system so far.

63. With regard to the Programme's role in the Global Environment Facility (GEF), his delegation questioned the Programme's confident assumption that it would continue to handle one third of the total portfolio of GEF. In fact, the World Bank's capital-intensive projects under GEF would in time represent the major proportion. It was unrealistic for UNDP to expect to continue to control a third of the programmes. UNDP must be realistic about the resources at its disposal and its resulting role.

64. His delegation also wished to know what contribution UNDP could make to improve the assessment of project proposals in the light of the objectives of GEF of meeting the incremental costs of global environment benefits. In that regard, the Programme's definition of incremental costs and global benefits and its interpretation of the role of GEF were too imprecise.

65. His delegation wished to know what role UNDP saw for itself in helping developing countries to identify activities with global benefits for potential funding by GEF. UNDP had been criticized at the December 1992 Meeting of the GEF Participants at Abidjan for its failure to disclose information on the programme and inadequate consultation with other Participants, and his delegation wished to know how the Programme intended to respond to such criticism.

66. Since the specialized agencies were involved in work representing less than 30 per cent of total UNDP volume, his delegation wished to know which were the other executing agencies. Was it the Office for Project Services (OPS), national bodies or others?

67. Finally, his delegation supported the idea that the primary governing body for GEF should be the Participants Assembly. It was right for the Governing Council to endorse, as a general rule, the decisions of that Assembly.

(Mr. Machin, United Kingdom)

68. His delegation considered that the most deficient aspect of the section of the report dealing with drought and desertification was its lack of reference to any need to review ongoing or past programmes of action involving United Nations agencies with a view to establishing more effective programmes in future. It was not enough for UNDP to suggest that the programmes had not been successful owing to a lack of funding. UNDP should indicate how it planned to review its activities and those of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) as part of the process of discussion of the draft international convention to combat desertification. Moreover, questions of strengthening regional and subregional organizations should be seen in the context of the analyses for improved programmes of action that should emerge from the discussion of the draft convention.

69. Mr. RYSIŃSKI (Poland) supported the Programme's efforts to launch and implement Capacity 21 and other initiatives aimed at increasing and better targeting resources for environmental protection.

70. The report under consideration was the first UNDP report since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to present different ideas on the various aspects of sustainable development in the context of technical cooperation. Governments would require routine and detailed information on the resources and mechanisms that UNDP could use to strengthen national programmes.

71. Poland knew from experience how important it was to consider environmental problems in the context of rapid economic transformation. In an era of transition, capacity-building was essential. That underscored the importance of, in particular, institutional solutions for environmental protection at the central and local levels and at the level of enterprises; the training of persons responsible for environmental protection; the preparation of programmes to reclaim polluted areas and protect unpolluted areas in countries and at their frontiers; and the role of non-governmental organizations. Since environmental protection did not recognize any boundaries, exchange of experience and regional cooperation should also be strengthened.

72. The strengthening of national capacities to formulate and execute sustainable development policies and programmes should lead to the establishment, at the regional level, of a sustainable development network that should be able to mobilize the financial resources required for long-term environmental protection, especially in the light of the needs and priorities of the various countries that comprised a region and of the region as a whole. The staff needed to execute UNDP programmes and projects should be recruited from under-represented regions.

73. Mr. RADE (Netherlands) welcomed the efforts of UNDP to clarify the elements of Capacity 21. His delegation was convinced that, in order to strengthen developing countries' capacities in the environmental field through

(Mr. Rade, Netherlands)

Capacity 21, UNDP should give priority to the country level. The field structure of UNDP should be strengthened in order to allow the Programme to formulate country programmes that would have to be executed by the recipient countries, with the assistance, if necessary, of bilateral or multilateral donors.

74. UNDP should clearly define the connection between Capacity 21 and activities being carried out in the same sector by the World Bank and UNEP, with a view to avoiding duplication and ensuring a coordinated approach to the study of the very real problems facing the developing countries in that area. It should also take into account the contributions of other concerned parties, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in the sector involving capacity-building in the area of forestry.

75. The Netherlands was ready in principle to contribute to Capacity 21 or to programmes carried out within the framework of Capacity 21 provided a satisfactory answer was given to the questions he had just raised. His delegation hoped that it would soon be possible to discuss those issues in greater detail on a more technical level with UNDP.

76. The implementation of GEF-financed activities required a strong field-level structure. In order to make developing countries more aware of the possibilities offered by GEF, UNDP should mobilize all the resources of its field offices; hence the importance of decentralization of those offices. In that respect, it was to be hoped that the decentralization proposals made in the document under consideration (DP/1993/3) would soon be implemented. Moreover, UNDP should make every effort to use the specialized agencies and other executing agencies as much as possible in the preparation and implementation of GEF-financed activities. UNDP should also vigorously pursue the efforts that were being made to strengthen cooperation between GEF and the regional banks.

77. On the issue of desertification, his delegation supported the continuation of cooperation between UNDP, UNSO and UNEP and believed that for the present those bodies should support the negotiating process for a convention on desertification as a matter of priority. New initiatives should be launched only if the need for them arose from the negotiating process.

78. Mr. CLAVIJO (Colombia) said that he had three comments to make about Capacity 21. First, the programme had many advantages. It bridged a gap between the objectives of Agenda 21 and the many specific needs of each country. The main characteristic of Capacity 21 was precisely its flexibility, which would make it possible to adapt the activities of UNDP to the many and varied needs of the developing world.

79. It was generally understood that Agenda 21 was very wide-ranging. It was therefore difficult to expect Capacity 21 to be more specific than had so far been proposed. Another virtue of Capacity 21 was that it dealt with a sector

(Mr. Clavijo, Colombia)

that was not covered by GEF. GEF was by definition limited to questions related to the world environment. Capacity 21, on the other hand, would enable countries to formulate projects and programmes on questions to which they accorded priority that had not been included in GEF. There was therefore no reason to believe that GEF and Capacity 21 would overlap. His delegation was prepared to propose specific projects to UNDP in five areas which were of high priority for the environment in Colombia.

80. Capacity 21 offered a further advantage. When it was conceived, it was suggested that the project cycle should be the regular cycle applied to UNDP projects. That approach should enable Capacity 21 to operate at a high level of economy and efficiency.

81. Second, the programme should be implemented with supplementary funds. Differing views had been put forward on the subject. Some found the goal of $100 million far too low, while others found it too high. One thing was certain: as implied in the UNCED agreements, the financing of environmental protection should be carried out with supplementary resources. There was therefore no contradiction between the priority accorded to the environment by UNDP and the financing of environmental protection with supplementary resources. Indeed, that reflected the spirit of UNCED.

82. Third, his delegation suggested that changes should be made in the section of the report under consideration (DP/1993/3) relating to Capacity 21. First, it seemed premature to believe that an overall programme evaluation of Capacity 21 could be undertaken as early as 1994; however, that was what was proposed in paragraph 34 of the Administrator's report. Second, with regard to paragraph 30, subparagraph (a), on strong government commitment to Agenda 21 and in particular to the proposal for wide participation by society in the formulation and implementation of the Agenda 21 programmes, his delegation believed that, in view of operational needs, that formula was too vague to serve as one of the criteria for the selection of programmes. Subparagraph (f), on the other hand, offered an appropriate formula: that it should be demonstrated that the proposed programme would secure the involvement of relevant and essential beneficiaries and partners. The wording of subparagraph (a) should therefore be amended; its philosophy could be supported, but the wording was too general and could pose a problem for the Governing Council when it had to apply it in practice.

83. Mr. DE GROOT (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that the decision taken at UNCED to designate UNDP as the lead agency in capacity-building for the implementation of Agenda 21 had come at a time when, despite the optimism generated at UNCED, development aid was declining and UNDP's own resource situation was grim. Capacity 21 was being launched at a time when existing programmes were being reduced. It was therefore necessary to see how existing resources and capacities could best be focused in order to enable UNDP to cope with the new tasks entrusted to it.

(Mr. De Groot, UNIDO)

84. Most of the United Nations system had been engaged in national capacity-building from the outset. Those activities must now be oriented towards sustainable development in the context of Agenda 21. In order to do so, however, there must be an understanding by all the parties involved - United Nations agencies, developing country Governments, donors and others - of the relationship of Capacity 21 to other UNDP activities such as IPFs and TSS-1 and the ongoing work of the various agencies. Bureaucracy and duplication must be minimized, and priorities must be set. In particular, it was necessary to define the scope of Capacity 21 and determine the most efficient administrative and organizational arrangements for its implementation, given that the level of resources for Capacity 21 would probably be significantly lower than had initially been hoped. The Commission on Sustainable Development which would review the whole of Agenda 21 when it met later in the year could provide some guidance in that respect, but it was essential for the United Nations system to make specific proposals in order to arrive at a common position.

85. Industrial development was a powerful instrument in building national capacities for sustainable development. It generated the income and employment that were crucial for those capacities. UNIDO was therefore to an overwhelming extent working on capacity-building in developing countries. In particular, it had formulated its response to Agenda 21 in great detail. UNIDO offered a forum for policy discussion, policy advice, analytical and technical studies, technical cooperation, technological development, information services and investment promotion. Those and other UNIDO programmes could be used for capacity-building in developing countries. UNIDO had the infrastructure (including the field network) to design and implement capacity-building measures for ecologically sustainable industrial development at the government level as well as at the level of semi-public and private enterprises.

86. UNIDO's support for capacity-building would concentrate on three fundamental aspects of sustainable development, namely, the incorporation of environmental considerations into industrialization policy and strategies, the dissemination and analysis of technological choices and the improvement of capacities to exercise choices among technological options. The General Assembly had confirmed that member countries wished to see UNIDO play a central role in the efforts to build capacity for sustainable industrial development.

87. Only a truly integrated and coordinated effort would lead to a successful implementation of Capacity 21. Everything possible must be done to avoid administrative and substantive duplication and over-bureaucratization. UNIDO was ready to cooperate with UNDP and others, and to take the lead on industry-related aspects of the Capacity 21 programme.

88. Mr. KONG (Department of Economic and Social Development) said that the Capacity 21 programme was one of the principal initiatives for channeling UNDP's response to the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It was designed to aid countries in the formulation and implementation of sustainable development strategies and national capacity-building programmes. The Department supported the use of that mechanism to assist countries in translating Agenda 21 into national plans of action. It was also an area where his department could make a positive contribution because of its extensive experience in development planning and natural resources management.

89. With regard to the Global Environment Facility, there were still questions outstanding about the role of the agencies in the governance of the Facility and the technical evaluation and approval of projects. Moreover, the end result produced by the Global Environment Facility still seemed to be a series of national projects sometimes unrelated to each other. The issue of the moment was how to address environment problems in a coherent way. Closer links would have to be established between ongoing programmes and activities. For their part, the United Nations agencies needed to develop innovative projects that would attract GEF financing. Inter-agency programming panels might ensure an integrated approach to environment and development issues.

90. With respect to resources, while implementation of Agenda 21 called for a substantial increase in international financial assistance, only very general commitments had been made thus far. While the Department intended to reorient its current technical cooperation activities in line with Agenda 21 and Capacity 21, implementation of new programmes would be difficult without additional financial resources. UNDP had a pivotal role to play in the mobilization of such resources.

91. Mr. NASR (Pakistan) said that his delegation fully concurred with the statement made by the representative of Colombia in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77. It was extremely important for the Governing Council not to take any decision on the Global Environment Facility until it received precise information on the ongoing consultations with respect to the restructuring of the Facility. Agenda 21 had specifically mentioned the restructuring of the Facility and any mechanism for obtaining the necessary funding for Agenda 21 should reflect the principles of universality and transparency.

92. Pakistan had benefited from the environmental activities of UNDP. The Government of Pakistan had developed the national conservation strategy with the assistance of UNDP.

93. While UNDP had been designated as the lead agency in capacity-building in developing countries, the resources allocated to Capacity 21 should not be diverted from UNDP programmable resources but should constitute new and additional resources as envisaged in Agenda 21.

94. Mr. MATSVAYI (Zimbabwe) said that his Government accorded high priority to the environment and its linkages with sustainable development as demonstrated by two important factors. First, the Government had established a Ministry of Environment and Tourism among whose functions was the development of national environmental and natural resources policies. That decision stemmed from the realization that no sustainable development could be achieved unless issues pertaining to the protection and management of natural resources were made an integral part of national development policies and strategies. Moreover, environment occupied a central position in the second five-year national development plan (1991-1995). Development and economic growth should not be seen as an end in themselves but should be seen in terms of long-term benefits given the need to strike a balance between high standards of living and the costs of maintaining such standards in qualitative terms.

95. The Zimbabwean delegation welcomed the many efforts that UNDP and the international community were making to integrate environmental issues with development issues. The environment had become a global issue inasmuch as the destruction or depletion of resources would have catastrophic effects on world peace and stability and would jeopardize the economic development of most countries. UNDP, the United Nations specialized agencies and the entire donor community must continue to be encouraged to provide resources for capacity-building, advisory services and training in developing countries. However, that assistance should be provided at the country's request because for policies and strategies to be sustainable, they should be part and parcel of national development priorities and should respect each country's sovereignty.

96. Agenda 21 and any other follow-up measures should seek to demonstrate the commitment of both the recipient countries as well as the donor community to develop practical policies and strategies which would enhance the abilities and capacities of national Governments to design, develop and implement projects and programmes which would ensure sustainable development. Zimbabwe, for its part, was doing everything possible to achieve that goal and would continue to direct its efforts and energies to resolving environmental problems.

97. Mrs. AMERASINGHE (Observer for Sri Lanka) noted that the Capacity 21 programme was very timely, responding as it did to an urgent need on the part of developing countries. It was also compatible with decisions taken at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development by all member countries, including the members of the Governing Council.

98. Her delegation fully endorsed the proposals made in the Administrator's report and felt that UNDP should place emphasis on all environmental concerns. The initial target of $100 million for the pilot phase of Capacity 21 was small in comparison with the technical assistance needs arising from the implementation of Agenda 21.

(Mrs. Amerasekare, Observer for Sri Lanka)

99. Furthermore, she felt that it was necessary to await the conclusion of current consultations on the restructuring of the Global Environment Facility before taking a decision in that matter.

100. Mr. FORBES-WATT (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that Capacity 21 should be viewed within the larger picture of the Agenda 21 programme, which had been generated by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. For its part, FAO had substantially redirected the activities of both its regular and its field programmes in such areas as agricultural and rural sustainable development and protection of tropical forests. Within the framework of Capacity 21, UNDP had been accorded a primary role in mobilizing and utilizing system resources for capacity development at the national level. That task, far from theoretical, involved numerous practical aspects and presupposed the adoption of goals and a strategy. The process went hand in hand with others and should enable Governments and national plans to play a major role.

101. FAO had on several occasions held consultations with UNDP; of note was its recent attendance, in Paris, of an inter-agency meeting on Capacity 21 during which participants had studied various collaborative approaches and determined that the programme was unique and had special characteristics of its own.

102. Adopting a collaborative approach towards the implementation of the programme would make it possible to draw on the talents and experience of the various elements of the system, in particular those of the specialized agencies, and thus to avoid duplication, overlapping, and waste of resources. FAO highly prized the Capacity 21 programme; it had provided UNDP with information on its agricultural and rural sustainable development programmes and had also offered to host the next inter-agency consultative meeting on that subject. FAO would be glad to make available to the programme its skills and experience in such areas as economic cooperation among developing countries and South-South cooperation with a view to more effective national capacity-building.

103. Mr. EDGREN (Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation) said that he would attempt to reply to the various questions and criticisms raised and to dispel certain doubts and misunderstandings. He fully agreed with the United States representative that the mandate conferred on UNDP by UNCED constituted an unprecedented challenge in the history of the Programme. It was not solely a matter of formulating and financing the greatest number of projects in the area of environment, but of designing approaches to ensure sustainable development. That process had begun well in advance of the Conference, as most country programmes had made sustainable development one of the chief components of the programming process; currently, however, sustainable development had to be integrated into the regular activities of UNDP. The Administrator's report had not dealt with that aspect because certain specific questions had needed to be tackled first, among them the capacity of UNDP itself to confront environmental issues.

(Mr. Edgren)

104. Capacity 21 had earned great attention not simply because it was a new programme but also because of its significance from the standpoint of resource mobilization. Whether or not UNDP had the ability to mobilize resources had been debated at length. It was clear that UNDP had been mandated to mobilize resources for developing countries; UNCED had expressly stated that donor resources should be mobilized for capacity-building in recipient countries. In fact, the question posed by a number of donors was not so much whether UNDP could mobilize resources but how it would do so and whether its activities would prove useful and effective.

105. The representative of Switzerland had asked whether Capacity 21 was a programme, an instrument, a framework or a forum for cooperation. As the representative of Japan had correctly pointed out, that initiative was in fact very similar to the Programme's special resources in that it was an instrument capable of strengthening the Programme and reorienting its activities so as to ensure the earliest possible attainment of the objectives set forth in Agenda 21 in four major areas. The first of those concerned development strategies. No new plans were needed in that area, as there were already too many, but those currently in existence must be made feasible, not only from the point of view of environmental protection, but also from that of sustainable development, by integrating sustainable development into existing plans and programmes. The second concerned the legislative and institutional framework, an area in which UNDP had long been involved but in which it hoped to adopt more specific measures with a view to ensuring more sustainable development. The third area, related to technology, was sufficiently clear and required no further development. Finally, the fourth area aimed to expand the support and participation of the population in sustainable development. Those, in broad outline, were the principal constituent elements of the Capacity 21 initiative. UNDP would, at a later stage, organize an informal briefing to provide more details of its current and future activities in that area.

106. In response to the concerns expressed regarding the creation of new structures, it should be noted that the management committee was composed of representatives of different offices and was a comparable mechanism to that set up for the women in development programme. Mechanisms of that kind were not new and should not therefore create more bureaucracy.

107. For the most part, the administrative expenses would be borne by UNDP. No new mechanism would be established and the budget to be presented at the ordinary session of the Governing Council in June 1993 would reflect the reorientation of UNDP activities towards rural development, a reorientation which would be reflected in the strengthening of its capacity to deal with those problems, particularly in field offices.

108. The representative of France had stated that there was a certain contradiction in presenting sustainable development as a strategic priority of UNDP activity while appealing for extrabudgetary resources through a specific

(Mr. Edgren)

fund. In response, he recalled that such a practice had already been followed in the past and that supplementary resources had been mobilized for activities deemed to be extremely important when available funds had been insufficient. It was apparent that the basic resources of UNDP were declining and the fact that the Programme was endeavouring to mobilize additional funds was indicative not of the low priority, but, on the contrary, the very high priority, which it attached to that task. In addition, the budget would clearly demonstrate that UNDP was assigning to sustainable development basic resources as well as resources allocated to country programmes.

109. As the United States representative had stated, it was not easy to ensure smooth interorganizational coordination. While difficult, however, the task was still not impossible. In that regard, he was grateful to the representatives of different organizations who had described the efforts undertaken by UNDP to coordinate the various activities and to present them to recipient countries and to donors who were sceptical about the effectiveness of that coordination. He hoped that the wide range of activities currently under way throughout the United Nations system could be described in a document.

110. With regard to the questions which had been asked on the subject of women, South-South cooperation and small island countries, UNDP activities in those areas would be set forth in detail in the documentation to be presented at the Council's session in June 1993.

111. With regard to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), he had noted the statements by Colombia, on behalf of the Group of 77, and Pakistan concerning the structure of GEF. Although UNDP was fully aware of the problems identified in that area, they involved political issues which it was not the task of the current meeting to address.

112. In line with the hopes expressed by the representative of Norway, it would probably be possible to organize a special briefing during the June session on the issue of links between GEF and several other programmes. In response to the representatives of United States and Colombia, who had asked when various assessments of the Facility would be carried out, he stated that so far very few projects had been implemented in the field, and that only one theoretical assessment was under way, the results of which would be submitted during the Council's ordinary session. In that context, it should be noted that GEF resources would not be used to strengthen the internal capacity of UNDP, thereby violating the principles governing the Facility.

113. In response to the representative of the United Kingdom, who had asked who carried out projects which were not executed by the organizations, he said that most of those projects were executed by national bodies, some by the project implementation office, which had subcontracted a certain number to non-governmental organizations and to intergovernmental organizations, and still others by the international development banks.

(Mr. Edgren)

114. The representative of the United Kingdom had also asked whether UNDP had its own definition of incremental costs, which constituted a very important aspect of the Global Environment Facility. Regrettably, there was no such definition at present. The agencies responsible for the management of the Facility, namely, UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank, had just held a seminar in India where they had raised that question and endeavoured to find a clear definition of the concept.

115. Finally, with regard to the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO), the experience, situation and role of that Office would be examined during the Council's June 1993 session. At that time, a report would be submitted containing answers to several of the questions raised. With regard to expanding the mandate of UNSO, he agreed with the representative of Germany regarding the need to exercise caution, since the Office's mandate had already been expanded and was sufficiently broad, considering its current capacity.

116. In response to another question raised by the United States, he said that GEF resources could be used for UNSO activities provided that those activities fell within the ambit of the problems addressed by GEF, such as the greenhouse effect, which was closely related to the process of desertification.

117. He regretted that he had been unable to answer all the questions raised, but he had taken note of them and hoped to be able to make additional clarifications during the informal briefing to be held later.

118. The CHAIRMAN said he would take it that it was the Council's wish that a draft decision on the question under consideration should be drawn up in informal consultations.

119. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.